

CHAPTER VII

AN AGE OF TROUBLES

1894-1900

The year 1893 was a critical year in the history of the nation as well as in the development of St. Louis Park. It was to witness a depression which took about four years from which to recover. The depression had its effect in The Park which affected it like a child who had had a severe illness but recovered. The blight remained to some extent but the child grew to maturity nevertheless.

The first years of the industrial suburb had found the residents and the nation engulfed in a wave of optimism - except for the western farmer who was having his troubles. The factories in the village were operating, giving work to many, and profits were accumulating in the treasuries. Monitor was producing about fifty grain seeders daily which, when sold to dealers, generally brought a number of promissory notes into the treasury. Esterly was busy producing mowers, reapers and twine tying grain binders. Employing about six hundred men at peak seasons, the factory produced about twenty-five binders daily. The binder sold on the retail market for about \$125 while the mower brought only about one-fifth of that sum. These two firms might be considered as having regional importance, though the carriage and wagon firms, and the iron company also sold some of its product outside the metropolitan area.

There were stirrings on the national scene which presaged trouble for the nation and the village. The census of 1890 revealed that the era of the free public land was about gone. Most of the arable land had been taken by claimants and the recently-taken public domain was now in full production - mainly raising grain. In addition to this factor, the nation was experiencing a deflationary trend which had begun with the ending of the Civil War. Prices of agricultural produce had dropped and farmers could not pay their debts. The second great era of expansion of the railroads was drawing to a close - a financial endeavor which taxed the power of capital in this country. Politics had reflected these troubles, the Greenbackers of the generation earlier had cried for inflation which would relieve the burden of agricultural debt. The Grangers had attempted to legislate the railroads under control - the railroad magnates having been identified with exploiters who raised transportation prices which reduced agricultural profit to nothing. Following the Grangers was the Farmers Alliance movement which made an attack upon grain grading, excessive interest rates on farm machinery, railroad elevators, railroad rates and deflation. Eventually this movement took on a political complexion and became the Populist Party. Some of the reform elements made their influence felt in the Democratic Party. Since the days of Tilden and Hayes, the two major parties had been about evenly balanced as to power and in 1884 the first Democrat since the Civil War, Grover Cleveland, won the presidency. Harrison replaced him in 1888 but in 1892, despite the incipient political revolt of the farmers, Cleveland was reelected. Though the Democrats had promised to remain on the gold standard and thus make for stability of prices, they had promised an attack upon the protective tariff. The tariff was reduced but industrialists were wary, fearing that the Democrats would fall under the spell of

the agricultural inflationists of the west. Thus the citadel of capitalists was full of forebodings. Land speculation in the west plus the great amount of foreign investments in industry were in a large measure responsible for the depression. While Americans were enjoying the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the west was plagued with a great drought and the crops were very poor. Something was bound to happen. The first break came in the stock market and two major financial concerns closed their doors. Money was tight and was withdrawn from the west increasing discontent. In June of 1893, the New York banks were forced to use clearinghouse certificates for money, while the market declined further in July. The government was forced to resort to loans to keep the gold reserve at what was considered a safe level. In the west the new messiah, William Jennings Bryan, was capturing Democratic and Populist support in fighting the money hydra. In the next year almost six hundred banks, mostly in the west, collapsed and railroads were rapidly going into the hands of receivers. General Jacob Coxey led 20,000 malcontents to Washington and the American Railway Union was involved in the notorious Pullman Strike in Chicago. The tariff was reduced in 1894 which supposedly hurt the manufacturers further. Interest rates dropped to the lowest rate in the history of the nation up to that time. Liquidation of the speculative boom continued during 1895 and reached its completion in early 1896, though Bryan did not know that the crisis was really passed when he ran for president. Recovery began in 1897, and McKinley was heralded as the great apostle of prosperity.

These events had their reaction in The Park as well as in the nation. The Minneapolis Land and Investment Company might have been called an organization interested in land speculation, and in the depression it was bound to suffer. Virtually no lots were sold and the stockholders sought to rid themselves of the burden of paying taxes on unsalable lots. Menages sold his interest to Walker in 1893 and within a short time Goodrich had sold out to him also. Walker himself was pressed for resources for financing his other operations. In 1895 he became a director in the Flour City Bank in Minneapolis, from which members could get loans, unlike today's banks.

The manufacturing companies in The Park were also in serious financial troubles due to the depression of 1893. The Monitor Works was forced, to close for one year, due to the lack of a market for their products in the agricultural areas. Thus many men found themselves without work, though a few went over to the Minneapolis Threshing Machine Company in Hopkins and worked. Some workers lived in Walker owned houses in the village for which they paid nine to fourteen dollars rent. But with the unemployment situation, paying rent was impossible and Walker either reduced rents or cancelled them altogether. In a few cases Mr. Walker and his wife took baskets of groceries to indigent workers. Malleable Iron Company was forced to cut back on production which likewise gave the village an unemployment problem. But the most serious blow was the failure of the Esterly Company.

It has been widely said that Esterly failed because of the depression of 1893 but there were perhaps other factors which hastened its demise. Among them would be found the drying up of agricultural credit in the west and the crop failures due to drought. The company was but a couple of years old and probably had not firmly entrenched itself in the economic field. Perhaps the company had many notes which were uncollectable which would limit its

production – and bank credit was hard to get. Added to this was the growth of the giant machinery corporations, Deerings, McCormicks and others, which gave serious competition. Then too, the technology of the United States was changing, and obsolete methods of manufacturing were changing. It had never been modernized sufficiently - rationalized - a favorite word of economists. But its failure was a serious blow to the infant village for it left about six hundred men without work, most of whom lived in the Park. Walker took over the assets and liabilities of the company, at some loss to himself. Then as a further blow, the Thompson Wagon Works burned, leaving a few more families without an income. Certainly the things looked black for residents, especially those who worked for industrial concerns which were hard hit by the depression.

In 1896 the oldest manufacturing concern in St. Louis Park ceased operations: The Globe Mill on Minnehaha Creek. Peter Schussler had bought the mill in 1882 and had operated it with water power for many years, though when the water level on the dam was low the operations had to be suspended. At various times he modernized the plant and by 1890 had replaced the stone burrs with rollers. About 1890, the county commissioners built a bridge and dam farther up stream which reduced the water, and Schussler was forced to install a steam engine for power. But the depression and the competition of the great mills were damaging and Schussler retired in 1895 and sold the mill the next year. An out-of-state company bought the plant, dismantled it, and moved it away.

But there were also gains industrially which took place while some of the firms were closing. Several new corporations were formed and found factories in the buildings vacated by the defunct firms.

The Minneapolis Chair Company was a firm whose main office was in Minneapolis but whose manufacturing plant was in St. Louis Park. It was incorporated to begin life on August 30, 1893 and was to exist for thirty years. Five hundred shares of stock at \$100 each was the stated capital, while the debt limit was \$25,000. The founders were Andrew R. Potter, John C. Buckbee and Francis Perot all of Minneapolis, who were president, secretary and treasurer, and vice-president, respectively. Two months after filing the first articles of incorporation the company was reincorporated. Only John C. Buckbee remained on the board of directors, while John T. Rogers and Gilbert M. Walker became the new members. Rogers was president and treasurer, Walker was vice-president, while Buckbee became secretary and manager. Walker was renting or leasing the building to the chair company. One report said the company hired one hundred men which is doubtful but it is certain that it was not large and did not employ as many people as did the Esterly firm.

A firm that was in the process of formation as the depression began was the Minneapolis Specialty Manufacturing Company which was capitalized at \$40,000 according to its articles of incorporation. The corporation began life on October 1st in 1893 and was to run for thirty years. The founders were F. M. Rutten, Edward Brunhoff, Charles H. Sievers and Charles Lehmann, the first three being the president, vice-president and secretary and treasurer, respectively. Located in St. Louis Park, it was formed to manufacture iron and wood specialties. Like the other firms locating in the Park, residents welcomed it with open arms because there was at the time a scarcity of jobs. Smoky factories and what today would

be considered intolerable hours and small pay, often only about a dollar a day, were to be preferred to no work.

What was perhaps the greatest boom for the people, a firm which would take the place of the defunct Esterly Company which had hired so many men, was the organization of the Minnesota Beet Sugar Manufacturing Company. The recovery period of the depression was in progress by late 1896 and early 1897, which was reflected in the actions of capitalists - especially those who might venture to invest in new industries. The Minnesota Beet Sugar Company was the result of the activities of five men: Gustave Theden, Swedish born immigrant who was editor of the Minneapolis Veckoblad and state senator from 1895-99; Henry Keller, German born veteran of the Civil War and at that time a banker at Sauk Center while also representing his district in the state senate; James W. Lusk, born in New York, a lawyer and a long time counsel for the Chicago Great Western Railroad before becoming president of the National German American Bank; Timothy Foley, born in Canada but who made a career of railroad construction, flour milling and lumbering in Minnesota and who now lived in St. Paul; and lastly, R.J. O'Connell, of whom little is known. These men incorporated the Minnesota Beet Sugar Manufacturing Company on May 10, 1897 for a thirty year life., The headquarters were to be in Minneapolis and the company was to be capitalized at \$250,00, with the power to raise the figure to one million dollars. Originally there were to be five thousand \$50 shares, though it is difficult to find out exactly what the paid up capital was. Debt limits were set at \$75,000. Theden was president; Keller, vice-president and general manager; and O'Connell was secretary and treasurer; the other two incorporators made up the remaining members of the directorate in a addition to the officers who were also directors. Apparently the company did not operate during the first year of its corporate life but sought a site and tried to get capital with which to operate. In January of 1898, Senators Theden and Keller, came, hat in hand, to the village council requesting them to grant the sugar company twenty acres on which to locate a sugar factory. The council resolved to do so and appointed a committee to get the land. Presumably the problem was referred to T. B. Walker or to the Minneapolis Land and Investment Company because the next year [1898] they were operating in the Walker-owned Esterly buildings. In October the company amended its articles of incorporation to state that the main office would be located in St. Louis Park and that the company hereafter would be known as the Minnesota Sugar Company.

The first beet crop which the company turned into sugar was raised in 1898. The beets were raised in the counties to the west of Hennepin and were shipped in by rail on the M&StL and Milwaukee lines which had spur tracks to the plant. Not only was there profit in refining sugar, but the legislature, wherein Theden and Keller were probably influential, also voted to give a bounty to anyone who would produce sugar in the state. The first year, 1898, the company drew \$19,000 bounty. Some change was made in the management of the company that year. Adolph Hinze, a New Yorker and retired capitalist became vice-president, and F. W. Fink, a retired New York capitalist became secretary and treasurer, Fred Hinze, who was probably a brother of the vice-president, a native of Germany and a graduate of one of the sugar-making schools in Braunschweig, and who had worked as a sugar refiner in New Orleans, was in charge of manufacturing.

The year 1899 promised to be another year of success for the company because they expected to make about four thousand tons of sugar. Over four thousand acres of sugar beets were raised in the neighboring counties and the plant could reduce about four hundred tons of beets daily. Thus they should have about one hundred days of work. The officers told newsmen that they would begin refining on September 15th, Apparently things went better than scheduled because forty days after beginning operations, Secretary Fink had to inform the beet raisers in a newspaper account that they should hold their beets for a few days because the factory had to have time to catch up. That week they were getting beets from Pierce and Goodhue Counties. By the first week in November the company was making fifty tons of sugar daily. The officers announced that the company had made this season 2,310,514 pounds of sugar. When they ceased operations in December of 1899, the officials proudly announced that they had made 4,341,166 pounds of sugar and had paid \$19,472 taxes to the state of Minnesota. That year they received a \$19,500 bounty from the state which indicates that their bounty was in reality a tax rebate device.

Reviewing the progress of the company in an article for the Commercial Minneapolis, a supplement to the Minneapolis Journal in April of 1900, it was pointed out that the plant covered-thirty-six acres, and had six large brick buildings, two being three stories high and had floor dimensions of eighty by two hundred, two being two stories with floor space of fifty by two hundred, and two were one story high with an area of fifty by two hundred feet. The half million dollar plant, .it was pointed out, was surrounded by a rail network on which they had their own switch engine. In 1899, the company had employed 450 men, and if prospects for 1900 held up it would produce ten million pounds of sugar for which it would need more men.

The sugar company was a welcome addition to The Park as far as employment was concerned and had the possibilities of employing as many men as Esterly had caused to be unemployed by their failure. Esterly and Monitor had been the two most important manufacturers who served more than local needs, and with the failure of the former only the Monitor remained. The Sugar Company moved in to take Esterly's place as a regionally important producer. But hardly had the Minnesota Sugar Company been well established when other troubles were to beset the infant company which would cause its removal in the next decade,

By 1890 St. Louis Park had within its boundaries one large grain warehouse that was built by Commander in 1880, but within the decade two more had found a site in the village. Another wooden structure was built on the M&StL siding in 1890 by the Peavey or Van Dusen Harrington firm. It had a capacity of about one and one half million bushels. Another elevator was constructed in 1898 by the Great Western Grain Company further eastward on the same railroad line. It too had a capacity of about one and one half million bushels. The former company, like all grain elevators, was continually faced with the problem of fire which might destroy a couple of million dollars worth of grain and the buildings in addition. Insurance rates were high and most companies wished to avoid fire entirely rather than receive insurance benefits which might compensate for loss of grain but would provide no grain by which the great mills could operate. One of the officials of the Peavy or Van Dusen Harrington firm had traveled in Europe in the 1890's and had seen a concrete silo type

elevator somewhere in eastern Europe - either in Russia or Germany. This seemed like a means by which one could make an elevator fireproof and furthermore Peavy wished to construct a number of concrete elevators at Duluth and wanted experimental data. On consulting with contractors Charles F. Haglin Co, it was proposed that a round form would be made which would be poured full of cement. After the cement had hardened the forms would be pushed up to another level and another batch of cement poured. However, the pushing upward of the forms required a new development in a jack which would raise the forms. The problems were solved and in 1899 the first concrete grain tank, which had a diameter of twenty feet and a height of 124 feet was built with sliding forms. The structure stands today in the yards of the Justus Lumber Stores and one can see the three different types of cement used in its construction. At one time the elevators extended from the present site to the cement structure but Van Dusen, who owned the Cable Piano Company in Chicago, dismantled part and shipped the first grade planking to the piano factory in Chicago. Though the firms never employed great numbers of men, the incident is related because it was in St. Louis Park that one can see a pioneer experiment which revolutionized elevator building throughout the United States.

There were other events which touched the lives of St. Louis Park people in one way or another, some of national and some of state importance. In the last half of the decade of the 90's, the country saw the rising tension between the United States and Spain over the Cuban Revolt which began in 1895. Under the fanning of the jingo press the crisis was reached in February of 1898 when the Maine, a visiting American warship, was sunk in a Cuban harbor, of unknown causes. Under the slogan, "Remember the Maine" the country found itself in war in April. When Dewey wired the president that he had fought a Battle at Manila Bay, the cabinet debated about the location of the capitol city of the Philippines, no one locating it within several hundred miles of its true location. Four Minnesota Regiments were called for service May 7, this state being the first to offer soldiers. Though no draft was used to secure manpower, at least four St. Louis Park men volunteered: Bill and Ed Williams, both moulders; Bert Williams, a flour miller; and Zeph Woods, a moulder who later ran a taxi service in The Park. Hardly had the war been declared than Cervera was defeated in the Caribbean and in August an armistice was made which was followed by a peace treaty. One had to volunteer early be trained quickly and be rushed to a front in order to be a veteran of the Spanish American War, though the pacification of the Philippine natives took somewhat longer.

On the state level, the first Democrat was elected governor since the Civil War. St. Louis Park, which cast 178 votes in the 1899 election, supported the Republican candidate, W. H. Eustis, with ninety-five votes while the Democrat, John Lind, received only seventy-eight while a third candidate got the remaining votes. Lind carried the state.

In St. Paul, in the same year, the cornerstone of the new capitol was laid to which a number of St. Louis Park people traveled to witness the ceremonies.

The government of the young village was likewise preoccupied with certain local problems, the most important of which was the providing of roads and sidewalks. Dan Falvey had been busy grading roads for the county and township but with the extinction of

Minneapolis Township by the organization of the two villages of St. Louis Park and Golden Valley, had thereafter worked for either the village or the townsite development corporations. Deep-rutted dirt roads were no longer tolerated by the civic minded villagers who did not object to a rise in taxes in order to secure graded roads which would shed water better. Taxes for road building purposes generally amounted to about two mills, a sum which seems like a mere pittance today. Most of the private transportation was by horse, though there were a few cyclists following that sport for fun and business. In the June 1897 meeting of the village council, seventy-five cyclists presented a petition asking for a bicycle path, to which the council assented and granted twenty-five dollars. Perhaps a good bicycle path was needed because the common type of wheel had a very high front wheel and a small trailer wheel behind, such as Dan Falvey had.

The other road problem of the council was that of providing sidewalks for the streets. No doubt it was the ladies who were most insistent in their demands for sidewalks, because one can imagine what the problem of cleaning mud from the long skirts was like in that day. However, the sidewalks were not the neat cement kind that we find today but rather were made of wood, four by four wooden stringers laid lengthwise, with two inch planking forming the surface of the walk. Many contracts were granted to carpenters to lay such elegant sidewalks.

Street lighting came in for discussion at the various council meetings and that body voted in 1899 to provide twenty-four gasoline lamps to light the streets. The council rejected an offer of the Welsbach Company to provide lamps at a cost of twenty-seven dollars per lamp per year and accepted the offer of the Lucas Brothers who agreed to provide lamps at the cost of \$5.85 each. With the purchasing of lamps the city hired a lamplighter who was paid according to the number of times he lighted the lamps.

The city business was done in the building erected for the use of a school and city hall. The school board and village council had cooperated in building a school-hall structure a few years earlier, a building which is today entirely used for the village hall. However, it was not entirely satisfactory and the Minneapolis Land and Investment Company offered in 1898 to give the village five lots in block six on which to build a village hall - the consideration being one dollar. Needless to say, the village did not accept the offer which would have placed the hall north of where the high school [Central] is located today. Earlier, in 1892, the investment company offered the village lots on which to build the jail which was accepted. The council voted to erect a two cell jail at a cost of \$4,000 and in the later part of the year the Gillette-Herzog Company put in the jail cells. The main use for the jail seems to have been to lock up an occasional drunk who became obstreperous. Most violators of the law seemed to have been content to pay fines rather than serve out time in jail. Police records for 1893 show that in the previous year \$178.50 in fines were levied of which only \$59 were paid leaving \$119 unpaid. Criminal cases amounted to \$98.17.

It was during this period of ten years that the problem of liquor came before the public and the government in an increasing degree. In the 1893 election, the vote on whether to allow saloons to operate under license or to refuse such requests was decided. The electorate voted 242 to 102 against license. Still there were a few who paid no attention to the

law - and one hotel had a room into which thirsty persons could retire and satisfy his tongue. It gave keys to the customers and only those with the pass key could get in - though one pioneer said that nearly everyone in town had a key. In the 1894 vote on the liquor question the prohibitionists again carried the field 186 to 130, and in the next year the vote was more impressive, the citizenry rejecting license of saloons by 216 to 56. But there were a few violations which came to official attention. At one council meeting "it was moved and seconded that Joseph Hamilton interview A. S. Banks in reference to drinking beer and card playing in his barber shop. If he agrees to do better, to allow him to continue in his legitimate business." Otherwise the village was quiet and little difficulty was encountered.

Economically the sources of income of the people was from two sources, manufacturing and market gardening, and social groupings followed those lines, in the main. In the former group would be the Fullers, Hamilton, Davises, Gibsons, Carpenters and many others. In the latter group, the market gardeners, would be the Waddells, Bastons, Grimes, Shepherds, Boyce, Rixons, and others who in general lived in the south part of the village. Parties and interhome visiting followed these lines though there was considerable drifting back and forth between these two groups. One pioneer recalls that dances were held at the various farmers' barns in the summer while in the winter they were held almost weekly in the brick block. George Gibson Sr, and his wife played the cornet and piano while the old time fiddling was done by John Latham. Every other dance was a square dance the rest being schottisches, waltzes and Virginia Reels. Likewise parties were held at various times and places and the usual amusement was cards, euchre being the most popular game. People came from long distances (according to standards then) to attend these parties. One Edina man of some wealth was the joke of some of the parties in that he kept cigars that were given by the host until he had a box full. At parties at his home he would distribute them to his guests. "Maybe you got a two for five center, or, if lucky, a ten center. What a lot of fun folks got out of that, wrote one old-timer. In the winter young people liked to go skating on the dam near the Schussler mill, and house parties centered around making popcorn balls, and pulling taffy. Young people walked to their parties, there being no other means of transportation. In the summer, young people could be found swimming in the Creek, and Sundays families often took the horse and carriage and went to a nearby lake. Swimming suits provided complete coverage for the anatomy, as befit a Victorian girl. And at the lakes there was canoeing for the young people in the process of courtship. Of course, for some there were certain amusements frowned on by the stem older generation - a few men sneaked off to Hopkins occasionally to play a bit of poker, and there were billiard halls where good young men were not supposed to be found.

More athletically inclined men liked to play baseball on Sunday afternoons and usually found an opposing nine within walking distance. Monitor had a team which found a suitable rival in the Minneapolis Threshing Machine Company team from Hopkins. Malleable and the Iron Works likewise had teams. By modern standards the equipment was meager. No bleachers for spectators who of ten numbered up to fifty people. There were no gloves except for the catcher who was allowed a thinly padded mitt, and no player had a uniform. Charley Nichols was one of the earliest pitchers who threw to Joe Williams, catcher. C. J. Miller, later mayor, was known as one of the better batters. Scores for games often ran up into the twenties and real pitching duels were fought out. Sometimes the

spectators would make a bet on a pitcher striking out the batter, and if he did, the hurler would have a silver dollar thrown out on the diamond to him. A bet of five or ten dollars was rare. When an umpire made a bad call a fight might ensue - which came to be a gang fight when the Hopkins team was the opponent. L.L. "Doc" Brown, the barber and operator of the pool hall, was manager of one of the early teams. There were some people who thought that baseball in itself was all right, but objected to Sunday games, among them T.B. Walker, who gave a field on which the nines could fight it out but tried to discourage Sunday games. Oldtimers still recall with a nostalgic sigh the good times they had in their youth.

But there were also cultural activities, thin though they might be. In the earliest part of the 1890's, a group of young men organized a band which played at many affairs. The village made contributions to its support but when they ceased to do so the group played under the name Monitor. The Monitor Band became good enough so that they were invited to play at the state fair and other celebrations. The village allowed them to use the village hall once each week for practice but later when the band began taking collections at concerts a small practice room was built near the Monitor Works. At one time there were about thirty-five musicians in the group.

Nor had church life been neglected in the young village. The Congregational Church which stood near Excelsior and Wooddale was moved near the city hall in the early 1890's and the Methodists had a small church near the trolley waiting station which was served by Reverend Kerfoot. On the west side of the marsh was a church built by T. B. Walker to serve the Oak Hill residents. Painted yellow, it seems to have been of Presbyterian denomination. More will be said about the churches in a later chapter.

The school had been built in 1893 south of the tracks and later was and is today used as a village hall. The original school, Pratt's, was moved from its location near Wooddale and Excelsior to a site west of the marsh where many people lived. The Independent School District which had been organized in 1888, was running two schools during the 90's. The principal received a salary of \$1,000 and the total budget was around \$4,000. In the last years of the century a teacher was provided for a privately built school in Manhattan Park area. The first high school subjects were taught in the last years of 1890's and the earliest class graduated shortly after the turn of the century. In another chapter the evolution of the schools is discussed in greater detail.

Many of the people who lived in The Park in the 90's look back with a great deal of nostalgia on the days of their youth. Especially did home life seem comfortable despite the crudities which were forced upon them. Meals consisted of potatoes, meat, vegetable and pie, of which the fresh meat came from Minneapolis. Bread was baked at home because no commercial bakeries provided it. Of bread, one man said, "They don't have bread like that any more. My sister still bakes her own bread and when I go over there I could eat a whole loaf for a meal." Milk was a food which could be had from the local dairymen but most families kept a cow which was pastured on the vacant lots in the neighborhood. Stray cows were taken to the village pound and the joke was told of a boy who was supposed to "picket out" the cow daily but often let her go free. The pound master would catch her and the boy's father would have to redeem the animal with a dollar bill. The son later found that the pound

master would split the revenue with him if he released the cow near to the pound. But nearly everyone had a cow and a garden and the more prosperous had a driving team. Clothing was also homemade, the mother buying cloth and making the garments, although shoes were most often purchased at a local store, of which there were two. People slept in a wooden bed with wooden slats for springs upon which was a tick filled with corn husks or straw. The mattress was soft at first but got hard in time and had to be refilled at harvest time. "I never slept better in my life" said one oldtimer in telling about his youth. Houses were heated with stoves into which was put oak and birchwood for fuel, but in a few homes coal was used. The woodshed housed the ricks of wood which was split by the boys of the family and brought to the house in the evening after school. Of plumbing there was virtually none - baths being taken in the washtub beside the kitchen stove on Saturday night. The first house in town to have a bathtub was the Joseph Hamilton home which had a zinc tub, though there were others within a few years. Water was secured from the pump in the yard or from a cistern which gathered rainwater from the roof. The lucky few had a pump in the kitchen; the rest carried it by pail from the well. Washing clothes was done by hand or by a hand-operated machine. Life was not easy but many look back with longing and homesickness upon the days when life was not so complicated and mechanical.

When the end of the century came, St. Louis Park could look back on fourteen years of corporate existence, and with some measure of pride. Population had grown from 350 in 1886 to 499 in 1890. But in the next decade it had climbed to 1,325, a growth of two hundred sixty percent. Minneapolis in the same decade grew about seventeen percent. The economic base for the village was industry, market gardening and dairying. Industry had had a set back in the depression of 1893 but had recovered. Walker was interested in the village but not as much as in earlier years - he was trying to recoup his losses of the depression. The year 1893 was probably the peak year of activity and the next decade would see a leveling off and a slight decline.